



# PUBLIC RELATIONS JOURNAL

JULY 1957

"... I hear they may have to close down..." "No, I haven't seen the report myself, but they say..." "What actually happened, they tell me..." "The truth of the matter seems to be..." "Listen, it just stands to reason that they wouldn't say that unless..." "It's supposed to be a promotion, but..." "This is supposed to be top-secret..." "I overheard a conversation the other day, and..." "Well, they tell me that one part of the plant is completely walled off..." "He hasn't really been well, you know..." "The papers haven't published a word, but I hear on good authority..." "If it weren't true, don't you suppose they would deny it?..." "I guess that where there's smoke there must be some fire..." "The smart boys already know about it..."

## RUMOR, FALSE REPORT AND PROPAGANDA

*Page 4*

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A JOURNAL OF OPINION IN THE FIELD OF PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE

# PUBLIC RELATIONS JOURNAL

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Rumor, False Report And Propaganda . . . . .	4
How rumor and gossip can menace business and individuals.	
Through a Glass, Darkly . . . . .	6
Using the right technique in presenting a company message.	
Information, Truth And Opinion Change . . . . .	8
The author claims information can, and does, affect opinions.	
Next Goal for Public Relations: Learning to Use Research . . . . .	11
How research techniques can help public relations people.	
Science, Censorship And the Public Interest . . . . .	12
What happens when science documents are classified "secret."	
Puff: The First Press Agent . . . . .	20
The author credits Sheridan who first described the press agent.	
Departments:	
Books in Review . . . . .	17
Professional Directory . . . . .	27

# Editorial

## *The Teacher Shortage— And Public Relations*

A recent issue of the JOURNAL included an article by Kenneth Rose on the "art of corporate giving." In this essay, Mr. Rose mentioned the idea that corporations, quite conscious of their public responsibility to give, face a problem in knowing how and when and where to give—and how much.

Harvard University has now issued a report which indicates that the American university, especially concerned with the teacher shortage, might be a primary object of financial support. The fact that qualified teachers are in "short supply" is not news. But the size of the universities' task in recruiting teachers is. Says the special report by a Harvard faculty committee:

"The 200,000 or so instructors now on the staffs of American universities will have to multiply themselves in the next 12 years or so to at least 450,000 through recruitment of no fewer than 25,000 new faculty members each year."

During the next generation, it is likely that American industry's top men (including public relations men) will come primarily from the colleges and universities. They can only be trained by teachers. The universities can only employ enough teachers if they have enough money. Tuition fees are not sufficient to supply the money. This is why American business firms, thinking of the future and their public relations of the future, might well evaluate their responsibilities to the universities. It is from the universities—with the usual significant exceptions—that the business executives of the future will come.

### *Training the Tyro*

On the one hand, we face the frightful fact that, as has been authoritatively reported, there will be a shortage of thousands of public relations men in the next decade.

On the other, we face the fact that some hundreds

of young men and women who are graduated from public relations courses or colleges each year go jobless—at least in public relations.

The potential employer's stance can be predicted: "Why hire this young man, really, when for a few dollars more I can hire a guy with experience?"

If public relations men were running shoe-repair stores they might reasonably take this position. But, since they move in the direction of professionalism, this position is not reasonable. People who are truly professional always recognize their responsibilities to the young. No profession can long exist if it persistently denies the "right of access" to the tyro. And, somebody has to start the process.

## *The Measurement Problem*

Most public relations men would like to be able to "measure" the results of their efforts. Others can.

A doctor knows whether his patient lives or dies, or whether the temperature drops from 101.4 to 98.6 degrees. A lawyer knows whether he won or lost the case, or just exactly how much the settlement was in dollars and cents. Even a garden contractor, who agrees to put in twenty trees, can demonstrate visually that he did.

Ordinarily, this luxury is denied the public relations man. The "intangibility" of his product is a problem. Sometimes public relations people sit around worrying about it.

Small reason to. Measurement *is* important, and some aspects of public relations work are surely becoming more and *more* measurable. But the real—and intangible—test of, say, an important policy speech is not how many copies were printed, or even how many were read, but rather what impact it had and will have. This is to some degree a matter of "feel" rather than measurement.

Decimal points are exact, and great where needed. But it is possible that they will never take the place of judgment. Let us hope that methods for measurement and criteria for judgment will develop together, in parallel fashion.



## How do you rate with the people who rate?

Your company probably has its own list of "who's who." They are the primary targets for your corporate advertising program. Many of them, perhaps, are not listed in the official "Who's Who." But to be successful, your corporate advertising must reach the kind of people who *are*. For these are leaders in every field, the people who influence the opinions of others.

And this is the kind of audience your corporate advertising reaches in The New York Times. A survey of men and women throughout the U. S. listed in "Who's Who" shows that four out of ten prefer The New York Times to any other newspaper. They read it regularly because they get

more information out of it — news they need about business, industry, politics, government, world affairs.

Your corporate advertising is information, too. When you publish it in The New York Times, it gets your company's story to the right people for you all over the U. S. And in The New York Times, it can start these people thinking about your company in the right way.

### The New York Times

*starts people thinking all over the U. S.*

# Rumor, False Report And Propaganda



*"It's Only a Rumor, but I Heard . . ."*

Rumor and gossip are nuisances and can become menaces to business, government and individuals. They poison relations between people and affect the well-being of society.

Rumor cuts across all boundaries of occupation and private life with a speed that is greater than that of any other human communication. Gossip, mostly directed against something or someone, does damage in business, family or community groups. Both cling to invention and deceit, and both, even though containing grains of truth, are malignant.

What can we do about it? In business life, in personal life, and in social life we need to puncture the lies in the gossip we hear. One mark of a rumor that makes it distinct from truth is that it carries with it no secure standard of evidence. The teller often seeks to protect his integrity by saying something like: "It is only rumor, but I heard..." Or he may say: "A man who ought to know says..."

Under some conditions gossip is a powerful tool for keeping society in order ethically and politically. We all dislike to be "talked about" because we cherish social approbation. In small communities, where everyone knows everyone else, gossip is effective in restraining anti-social behavior.

## **"Gossip is the Voice of the Herd"**

Gossip, said Kimball Young in *Sociology*, is the voice of the herd, thundering in our ears, telling us that the goblins of ridicule, ostracism, and punishment will get us if we don't behave.

Having paid this tribute to gossip as a social force for good, we must admit that the rattling tongue that dissects dead scandals or whips up new ones to amuse companions is doing a great deal of damage.

Our culture seems to be saddled with gossip for good or bad. Someone said that perhaps we should hang all the gossips, only it might come to pass that there would be no one left to pull the rope. We can make sure that we refrain personally from taking part in malicious or dangerous gossip and rumor, and that we kill by ridicule or exposure any that comes to our attention.

How does gossip start? It may arise from love of one's own pet ideas. When we take a slap at something we don't like, we experience an emotional release. Just as important, we give ourselves a chance to explain to ourselves and others why we feel as we do. On a lower level, our gossip may be accusing others of having done what we would like to do.

We may gossip merely to fill a gap in a tea party conversation, and then, as Lady Teazle said in Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*, "when I say an ill-natured thing, 'tis out of pure good humor."

It is easy to go on from that to enlarge one's activity. Flushed by success, the coiner of rumor becomes arrogant. The attention he receives turns his head. He mistakes his toy trumpet for the trombone of fame.

### Rumor in Business

There has been no great business executive unplagued by the indiscreet talk of his assistants and workers. Only the common cold is a rival to rumor in the speed in which it spreads through a factory or an office, and the disturbance it causes.

Rumor about the personnel of a firm may result in loss of business, damaged reputations, physical illness, and destruction of morale. Rumors predicting misfortune to the business, to a department, or to a class of workers, are of this sort. Rumors that arise from wishful thinking—the so-called "pipe dream" rumors—can be nearly as deadly, because they build up workers' hopes in readiness for a let down.

The grapevine within an organization always deals with something affecting the employees or their families, but it may attack anyone from the president down to the wash-room attendant. If it starts from the personal insecurity of one man it may spread to take in everyone.

Whispering campaigns can be organized to slander a department head or an executive. The only answer found so far is quick and definite publication of the truth, stemming from an honest will to have understanding prevail. Use of bulletin boards, employee magazines, and meetings of

supervisors may straighten out the distorted stories.

One big corporation tries to cope with this problem by keeping up to date a loose-leaf facts book, given to all employees. It tells about the company, the industry, employee relations, prices, profits and risk, the role of management, and how the company is financed.

It is not only among workers on the lower levels that gossip must be guarded against and met. Thoughtless talk by junior executives and department managers can cause trouble. The temptation to give the impression by hints and sly suggestion that he is "on the inside" has withered many a man's budding reputation.

Not much is needed to start a dam-



"What actually happened, they tell me . . ."

aging rumor. Not even words are needed, but merely shruggings and hunchings of the shoulders.

The basis of a rumor may be an actuality. Someone sees or learns something that he thinks is of enough interest to communicate to others. He may supply fanciful embroidery. He may distort the facts. He may blend this incident with others of a similar kind.

### All or Nothing

A mulish way of thinking common to rumor-mongers and gossips is that of all or nothing, black or white. Gossip ordinarily leaves no room for grays. A teeny bit of badness demands wholesale condemnation. The "badness" may not be a breach of our moral code, but only a little deviation from the customs of the community or of the workshop.

Most propositions are both true and

false, depending on time and place. The rumor about them may bear the same resemblance to truth as a broken mirror does to a whole one.

Dryden referred to distortion in this way: "Some truth there was, but dashed and brewed with lies to please the fools."

Prejudice is a fertile base for rumor. Our beliefs of today may have their roots in bigotry far in the past. Those we inherit may be added to by experiences in childhood or in our business years, and may become shackles preventing our free exploration of thought.

The man trying to think straight will keep this in mind when he comes up against a rumor. If there is ample evidence he may say he knows such-and-such; with less evidence he may have an opinion about such-and-such; but when evidence is almost or quite absent he may not even venture a guess. It is a good thing, and not only in testing rumor, to know that you do not know.

Bias or prejudice may show itself in the loose or improper use of words. Much of the pain and misery in the world today can be laid to erroneous or wrongful use of words.

One cunningly chosen word may have more power than a thousand good deeds. Give a man a cleverly bad name and it may do him more harm than many sound arguments would do him good. Out of realization of this danger has grown our law of defamation.

### Making Up Tales

People who manufacture false tales to push their own interests are likely to take advantage of feelings of fear. If the times are out of joint, if our familiar world is being touched by innovation, if workers are apprehensive about new taxes or new methods or changes in management, there is a ready-made occasion for the rumor-monger's effort. He may seize upon a "poison" word, or use a good word in a poisonous way. Consider how Marc Antony did just that in his speech, skilfully converting good words into poison to turn public feeling against Brutus, the "honorable" man.

*Continued on Page 10*

# THROUGH A GLASS, DARKLY

by STEWART SCHACKNE

Nearly all of us, I suppose, regard ourselves as pretty logical fellows. Of course we may get irritated or impatient at times and spring to conclusions which we perceive a little later to be wrong and therefore modify. But, as a general rule, if we have the facts, we come to the conclusion—indeed, the only conclusion—to which they lead.

Being logical persons ourselves, we credit other people with being logical, in the same way we are.

These convictions lead public relations men and, probably more often, their principals, to believe that the process of communication consists simply of supplying "the facts."

But is supplying "the facts" the whole of communication? Is there not another, and very important element—namely, the predisposition of the person who receives the facts?

## **Facts Do Not Exist in Isolation**

Experience indicates convincingly that facts do not exist in isolation. Rather, they exist and take on meaning in relation to individuals' values, fears, hopes and expectations. Thus a public relations man's audience may accept without question some of the facts he presents, receive some with doubt, reject others outright, and rearrange still others so as to draw conclusions quite different from those which were intended.

The error of believing that a presentation of the facts is the whole of communication becomes particularly apparent when representatives of one culture attempt to convey ideas to people of another.

History is full of examples of the failure to foresee the complications which arise when different cultures meet and try to influence each other. Armed with hindsight, we can point out some mistakes of the past—the Spanish conquistadores destroying the temples of the Indians of the New World; the British, during the last century, taking their practice of greasing bullets with beef tallow to India where cows were sacred. In more recent times there was the resounding lack of success of German radio propaganda beamed at the British during World War II. The facts which Radio Berlin and Lord Hawhaw put on the air in the grim days of 1940 and '41 were true: the British did face the prospect of utter defeat. But the response to the broadcasts was very different from what the Germans intended. Instead of persuading the beleaguered people to surrender, the broadcasts spurred their determination to go down, if they must, fighting to the end. The Nazi propaganda people were logical up to a point, but there they overlooked an important factor—British character and tradition.

## **Psychological Warfare**

On the other hand, the history of psychological warfare in World War II shows a dramatic instance where sensitivity to the traditions of an enemy paid off. In spite of pressures on the home front, our information and psychological warfare services never made a personal attack on the Emperor in broadcasts to the Japanese. The wisdom of this policy was borne out when, following the surrender in Tokyo Bay, General MacArthur and the Allied Forces worked through the prestige of the Emperor to impose order on the Japanese home islands.

The psychologists have a word for the awareness, partly intuitive, partly learned, of the intricacies of the other fellow's values and sentiments. They call it *empathy*. Because the company I work for operates on virtually a world-wide basis, we have had what are perhaps rather special opportunities, and also needs, to empathize with peoples whose backgrounds, histories and, therefore, modes of thought are different from our own.

## **Jersey's Thrift Plan**

Consider, for example, how differences between North American and South American concepts of the relationship between employee and employer led to a curious situation in one of the overseas companies affiliated

with Jersey Standard.

Jersey and its domestic affiliates have long had an employee savings program which we call the Thrift Plan. Under it, an employee can authorize the company to withhold and put into an account for the employee a percentage of his pay which, within certain limits, he designates himself. To this the company adds a "regular" percentage and, in years of good earnings, an extra contribution. Together, these usually amount to a substantial addition to the employee's own savings. He may make withdrawals from these savings at intervals, can borrow against them at a low interest rate, or can exercise various estate-building options.

The attractiveness of the plan to North Americans is indicated by the fact that more than 98 per cent of domestic employees participate in it voluntarily. Perhaps because those of us who had known the plan for a long time almost took it for granted, or because of its high employee acceptance in affiliates where it existed, we tended to assume that its merits were self-evident. So when the plan was proposed to workers in a South American country, it was assumed that the move would be warmly hailed. But that didn't happen. Instead the unions strongly opposed the suggestion.

### The Search for Causes

After recovering from our initial astonishment, a search was begun for causes. The union leaders felt, it was discovered, that if a worker could save money, that fact proved he was so well paid that the reason for the union's existence would be undermined. The union leaders felt, in other words, their own security and purpose in life to be threatened. When it became clear to them that they would still have many functions to perform, their opposition to the Thrift Plan evaporated.

A second example comes from a different part of the world. There another of our affiliated companies decided (probably with considerable sense of performing a good deed) to offer scholarships to young people of the nation. In accordance with what we consider a virtue in the United

States, the scholarships were of the "no-strings-attached" variety—that is, they carried no requirement that a recipient work for the company after completing his studies. Response to the offer was unmistakably poor. By our logic, there was no explanation for the almost total absence of applicants.

Investigation disclosed in due course, however, that the "no strings" aspect of the offer had created grave suspicions. The people of the country

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After several years with Scripps-Howard newspapers, he served as editor of house magazines for industrial companies in New York and as associate editor of a Hearst trade publication. Mr. Schackne is co-author of the book, "Oil for the World," published by Harper & Bros.

In public relations work since 1935, he joined Earl Newsom and Company, public relations consultants for Jersey Standard where he was assigned to assist Jersey's public relations activities when a department was formed to centralize them.

A native of Toledo, Ohio, Mr. Schackne attended Yale University and Dartmouth College, from which he was graduated in 1927. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa.



knew the company was in business for profit; it was not a charitable institution. By their logic, it followed that if the company did not require scholarship recipients to work for it, it must have some other motive of self-interest, which was being deliberately hidden and therefore was probably sinister.

When this attitude was discovered, the scholarship offer was revised to require that anyone receiving such aid

would have to take employment with the company for a period equal to the duration of the scholarship. With this change, scholarships were eagerly sought.

These experiences dramatize the fallacy of thinking that, if people are merely presented with clear, truthful information, they will come to the conclusions or will take actions which we desire. To assume that, because a set of facts or line of argument is persuasive to the communicator, it will necessarily be persuasive for its intended audience is unwarranted in any country.

Sometimes failures to communicate stem not so much from cultural differences as from our assuming prior knowledge on the part of our audience when, in fact, such knowledge does not exist. This error was demonstrated by the experience of one of the companies affiliated with Jersey in training a group of young men who had been living in a pre-machine age culture.

In keeping with a policy of employing local residents to the greatest extent possible, the company embarked on a program for training truck drivers recruited from the local population. Lectures were given on the necessary steps in starting a motor and operating a truck. But when the trainees were turned loose on their first vehicles, it became clear that one important point had been overlooked. They were unable to climb into the cabs because they had lived all their lives in tents and had not been shown how to open a door.

### Cultural and Psychological Differences

Concern with possible cultural and psychological differences between us and our audience should extend not only to what we say but to how we say it. Techniques employed in presenting a message can have an important effect on determining its level of acceptance.

For example, promotional techniques which are entirely familiar in our country may be altogether wrong for communicating ideas in other parts of the world. One of our affiliates in

*Continued on Page 19*

# *Information, Truth, and Opinion Change*

by WALTER WEISS

John Doe does not like company X. He believes it to be unfair to its employees, to be too big for the general good, to be ruthless in its transactions. Let us assume these beliefs are incorrect. The immediate question is then: How are these unfavorable opinions to be changed?

Why, by an information campaign, of course. Invite him to an open house. Send him literature. Place institutional ads in the papers and magazines he reads. Have favorable news stories printed. And so on. This all too common prescription seems to follow like a reflex reaction the diagnosis—unfavorable opinion. The implicit assumption underlying the nostrum is that opinions about an object solely reflect knowledge concerning the object. Correct the knowledge and you change the opinion. Hence the emphasis on communicating information designed to reflect specifically on the relevant opinion. He believes you are too big? Tell him (a) you are not or (b) that bigness contributes to efficiency, economy, more and better products, his home, his welfare, the happiness and well-being of his family. Show him how mistaken he is by imparting focused information to him. The more and the more often, the better.

## **Law of Mass Communication**

Is it possible that Mr. Doe's opinions are not primarily due to his knowledge about company X? Is it

possible that he can read or listen to or "see" the information and remember it, but that his opinions remain unchanged? Is it possible that despite the information campaign he just does not attend to your messages? Unfortunately for the communication enthusiast, there is sufficient research evidence to support "yes" answers to these questions. For example, a first "law" of mass communication is that people attend to those appeals that are consonant with their existing interests and opinions and avoid the non-consonant ones.

The difficulty of influencing opinions with an information missile may be likened to the problem of hitting a moving animal when you must fire at a blur that may not even be the animal or may not be a vital part. At least in academic research, the animal is stationary—the audience is a captive one. Yet, even under such supposedly ideal conditions (and surely they would be considered sufficient by some to make sitting ducks of the audience. Imagine being able to reach the ear and eye of every Russian!) opinion change is not the inevitable consequence.

Opinions are not the same as received information. For even if the audience learns the message, knows every word, beliefs may still be unaffected. The message must be accepted as true, sound, valid for an impact on opinions to occur. And there are times when even though this ob-

jects, encapsulation or reinterpretation of the information occurs with little resultant influence on opinions. John Doe may accept the information that company X has a wonderful pension plan but attribute ulterior motives to the company in instituting the plan. Furthermore, those opinions that are important to us or have their links with personal needs or values and social motives are defended with ingenious strategies. Clinical investigators are distraughtly aware of this. As one remarked, impaling a person's opinions with words is like trying to catch a fish with bare hands.

## **How Information Affects Opinions**

My purpose in making these comments is not to deny any influence to information in the "natural" communication setting, but rather to establish proper perspective for the main substance of this paper. Assuredly, information can and does affect opinions. But under what conditions? Not always or as easily as an information purveyor would like to believe. Even if the audience is reached, what requirements must obtain in order that the communication achieve the desired effects? One necessary condition is that the message be accepted as true. But under what conditions is this judgment elicited?

Truth is our weapon. The strategy of truth. A truth crusade. Truth will win men's minds. Such phrases and slogans are commonplace in current

discussions of international propaganda struggles. Even on the domestic scene, the communication specialist when he lauds the efficacy of information is implicitly equating information with truth. That is, if we can only get the truth to the American public about capitalism, big business, the oil industry, etc., we will correct the false, one-sided impressions they have.

Underlying such contentions and slogans is the implicit assumption that truth in a communication will automatically elicit acceptance of the message as true. This unfortunately is false. The critical consideration is whether or not the *audience* believes the message to be true, *not* whether or not what the communicator says is objectively true—or even false. The defendant in a murder trial may actually be telling the truth, but if the jury disbelieves him, his fate is an unpleasant one. A taxpayer may truly be paying for someone else's electric bills; but if the public rejects as false the assertions made in an ad, of what avail is the truth in the communication? A Hitler may tell a big lie, but if people believe him, their responses to his assertions will be the same as though he were telling the truth.

#### The "Truth-Value"

Thus, it is not the communicator but the audience that establishes the "truth-value" of a communication. Truth does not inhere in a communication; it is a judgment of the audience. Neglect of this basic consideration can and does lead to naive assumptions concerning the efficacy of truth in communications.

The most exact and cogent test of the truth of a communication is to check the assertion with direct experience. If a newspaper story reports a fire, go to the scene of the reported fire and observe for yourself. A company is building a new plant in town Y? Travel to town Y and see for yourself. Obviously, such tests are possible only with respect to statements about the existence of directly observable phenomena. The building of the plant can be observed but the motives for the expansion cannot; overt behavior can be perceived, but attitudes and opinions are inferred. Furthermore,

determining truth by the stringent test of direct experience is infrequently resorted to. Only if the event is of particular importance to us, do we go and see for ourselves. Of all the things that we "know" to be true or false, very few have been subjected to this direct check. Yet, we feel secure in our acceptance as true or rejection as false of the enormous quantity and diversity of "facts" we possess. What then are the bases for our judgments?

#### The Communicator Himself

The communicator himself is a primary determiner of our judgment of the truth of his statements. If we consider him to be a trustworthy, credible source, then we are likely to accept his statements as true. If we consider that he has no "ax to grind" or is an impartial observer and reporter, then we are likely to judge his statements as true. Implicitly, we often apply another test: Is there consistency between communicators in their reports of the same event? If one newspaper headlines a story of an earthquake, do other news sources report the same event? If not, a "beat" may have been scored; but many of us are likely to reserve judgment until confirmation is obtained from another source. (Failure to do this, led many people to accept the veracity of the famous Orson Welles' broadcast concerning a Martian invasion of Earth.)



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Another test often applied is to examine the consistency of a communicator with himself. Does the politician make the same assertions in the North as in the South on the question of racial integration; does the foreign secretary say the same thing when speaking in parliament as when he addresses a foreign audience; is the front-line newspaper distributed to the enemy known by them to be the same as that distributed to one's own troops?

If a communication supports, confirms, or is congruent with existing opinions and attitudes toward some object, then it is likely to be accepted as true. If big business is distrusted, a report that giant X is unfairly raising prices or monopolizing the market will probably be judged as true. If information does not fit one's expectations and assumptions about the "world-at-large," that are derived from personal experience and previously accepted knowledge, the communication is likely to be viewed as false. For example, a surrender leaflet in the last global war depicted German PWs eating eggs for breakfast; the intent was to indicate the good treatment the German soldiers could expect if they surrendered. The actual effect was disbelief and rejection, for the Germans themselves had no eggs and assumed the enemy had few and would certainly not waste them on German PWs.

#### The Audience's Expectations

The audience's expectations about the customary amount of truth in communications is a significant determiner of their judgment of a communication. For certain groups under certain circumstances, custom may permit and the audience may expect something less than complete truth. For example, campaign promises or assertions may be judged quite cynically and with a different yardstick than that applied at other times. Even the particular means of communication that is used to project a message may affect the evaluation of the truth of the message. If there is any difference in the trust people place in the veracity of newspapers, radio, TV,

*Continued on Page 25*

# Rumor

Continued from Page 5

**"No. I haven't  
seen the report myself,  
but they say..."**

**"What actually  
happened, they  
tell me..."**

**"The truth of the  
matter seems to be..."**

**"It's supposed to be  
a promotion, but..."**

**"The papers  
haven't published  
a word, but I hear  
on good authority..."**

**"This is supposed  
to be top-secret..."**

**"I hear they may  
have to close down..."**

**"It stands  
to reason that they  
wouldn't say  
that unless..."**

Although our law, going back a thousand years to Magna Charta, insists that an accused person is innocent until he is proved guilty by evidence acceptable to judge and jury, we have in these days to guard against an outbreak of "guilt by association." All the rumor-monger needs to do under certain circumstances is to find a characteristic in the man he reviles that is the same as a characteristic in an acknowledged evil man.

An illustration used by Stuart Chase in *Power of Words* will make this clear. The *Economist* (London), listening in astonishment to the charges coming from investigating committees of the United States Congress in 1952, proceeded to apply their logic to Sir Winston Churchill. As a member of the Church of England, said the *Economist*, Churchill was automatically associated with an admitted fellow-traveler, the "Red" Dean of Canterbury. As a member of Parliament, Churchill for fifteen years shared the House of Commons with a card-carrying Communist, William Gallacher. As a member of the Big Three in World War II, Churchill sat at conference tables with Joseph Stalin. Therefore, according to the "guilt by association" method of judgment, Churchill must be a Communist.

To us, reading thoughtfully, this appears to be the height of absurdity—but, after all, is its reasoning very different from that behind many rumors in factory and office, in church and school, in community and home?

## Propaganda

Some people lump propaganda together with scandal, rumor and gossip in a wholesale condemnation. Here we run into danger of "guilt by association." Undoubtedly propaganda is like planned rumor in that it is designed to influence the attitudes of people through the use of suggestion. But much education is of the same sort.

The evil in some propaganda is its failure to disclose the source of information. The most subtle element in the propaganda of the European dictators was their exploitation of the dummy so that we did not notice the

ventriloquist's tricks.

Educational propaganda, openly avowed, making its appeal to reason, crediting the listener with some common sense, acknowledging the existence of fair play and justice—that sort of propaganda should not be put in the same basket with propaganda that appeals to envy, hatred, prejudice, and our baser instincts.

Propaganda is not subject matter, but the way subject matter is presented. It is, as they termed it during the late war, either "black" or "white"—hidden or open in its sponsorship.

A piece of rumor or gossip planted in a workshop or office to sap morale or confuse issues is "black" propaganda; a statement printed over the signature of a responsible person and posted for all to see is "white" propaganda.

## "Black" Propaganda

It is not by chance that "black" propaganda is mostly of the "poison pen" sort, designed to spread hatred, while propaganda carried out openly is directed toward betterment, co-operation and friendship.

Propaganda by rumor is at its worst when it refrains from making outright statements and contents itself with coloring information. It whitens the saintly characters of some and blackens others. We shall find it worth while, if we seek not to fumble our human relationships, to compel a revelation of what is in the accuser's mind. The great condemnation of Pontius Pilate is not that he asked a question: "What is truth?" but that he did not compel an answer.

Searching examination is just as necessary with printed matter as it is with spoken words. We do not need to beware only of what is printed in so-called "scandal sheets." We need to look for thoughtless or sly inclusion of opinion and bias in news reports and commentaries.

What is printed need not be untrue in order to convey a wrong thought or impression. The emphasis in display, in size of type, and in the use of words may slant what is reported in favor of this or that party or against

Continued on Page 22

# Next Goal for Public Relations: Learning to Use Research

by STEPHEN E. FITZGERALD

Practitioners of public relations are beginning to catch on to the uses of opinion and attitude research. But the sad truth is, I suggest, that we in the public relations field have thus far learned to use research tools in a rather half-hearted and sometimes inept fashion.

Only a few of the independent counselling firms employ personnel equipped to deal professionally with research problems; and, for that matter, much the same thing is true of the public relations departments of the larger corporations — with some few significant exceptions. Research techniques are being widely used by business people trying to find answers; but these techniques are not as yet being widely used by public relations people. Consequently it could be argued that a substantial number of the policy decisions being made on public relations questions are sometimes little more than skillful guesses.

This strikes me as a deplorable situation. Stuart Chase once made the point that opinion research, broadly defined, comes close to being about the only scientific or near-scientific tool that we have available in the public relations area. If this is true, and I hold that it is, then it implies that public relations people, dealing constantly with increasingly complex problems, are often much like the old-time aviators who "flew by the seats

of their pants." This is no longer good enough.

There are, to be sure, some signs of hope, and I shall come to them presently. But the general situation I believe to be about as I have stated it: public relations people are not yet using research techniques adequately, either qualitatively or quantitatively. And, before we can hope to change all this, it is necessary to examine the reasons why.

## Firms in the Hundreds

The practice of public relations has expanded rapidly, but not according to any rational plan. A generation ago, when *Public Opinion Quarterly* was just coming into being, there were only a dozen or so independent firms listed under "Public Relations" in the New York telephone book. Today the listings under that heading may be counted in the hundreds. In that earlier day, the business corporation which had a public relations or even a publicity department was rare indeed. Today almost the reverse is true.

Public relations people are everywhere: in business and commerce, in Government, in trade and professional associations, in labor and "cause" groups. They are largely unorganized and, save for those who subscribe to the code of the PRSA, they are largely undisciplined. In most cases their training for the work they perform has been informal and without benefit of academic orientation. This is not, however, inconsistent with the fact that there are a good many skillful practitioners at work, just as there have been good professionals in every

field prior to the coming of thorough professionalization.

Increasingly these public relations men and women are being called on to help formulate top policy programs and to assist in making decisions of major importance. Gone is the day when even intelligent management men were not quite sure whether "public relations" was not just a fancier name for "publicity." They know better now. Public relations people in policy posts are often called on to use publicity, but they and their clients and employers know that publicity is a *tool* of public relations, not a different phrase for the same thing.

## Drive to Increase Professionalization

There is, quite clearly, a drive toward the increasing professionalization of public relations work. The drive has a lot of steam behind it, which is encouraging. We can hope that good public relations work will drive out bad public relations work. But on the other hand, the Code of Ethics maintained by the Public Relations Society of America is not yet a strong one (though efforts are being made to strengthen it) and anyone who wishes to call himself a public relations man is free to do so. Many do. As I have said on other occasions, too many people are practicing public relations "without a license." Poor performances by practitioners, occasionally even mercenary and cynical performances, do not increase confidence. And poor performances combined with sheer guesswork about people and their motivations make the problem more acute.

*Continued on Page 14*

**This article has been published concurrently in the Twentieth Anniversary issue of the *Public Opinion Quarterly*.**

# SCIENCE, CENSORSHIP AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

by GERARD PIEL

Scientific writing and technical writing have now been given formal status as professions by the organization of their respective national associations. They have different and complementary roles. The scientific writer, according to his incorporation papers, is concerned with the external communications of science; that is: communications between science and the public-at-large. The technical writer, in turn, is concerned with internal communications, with the preparation of the reports, manuals and formal papers which serve communications between and among scientists, engineers and technicians.

## **Problem of Technical Writing**

Judging by the agenda, it is the problems of technical writing which will furnish the principal preoccupation of this conference. Now what sort of problems could they be? One would think that in the internal communications of science we had a situation that is ideal for bell-like clarity of transmission and reception. The report, the paper or the manual is addressed to a small audience. The members of this audience may be presumed knowledgeable. They have reason to be interested and they are compelled to understand. Even so, these sessions will be devoted to the art and craft of writing as a means of

mediating technical communication. The professional writer is now accepted by the scientist and engineer as a full-fledged partner and collaborator in the preparation of papers and reports. The King's English, as expounded by the brothers Fowler, is gaining ever wider recognition as the medium, *par excellence*, through which most of the problems of technical communication can be solved. And sessions in this conference will even be devoted to the use of illustrations as a way to take the torture out of prose.

Such concern with the technique of communication in this ideal situation suggests the frailty of human communication under any circumstances. It gives us also an impressive measure of the importance of communication in the process of research. It is not too much to say, in fact, that without communication there can be no research. In an exact sense, the situation is analogous to Bishop Berkeley's point about "the tree in the quad"—it doesn't exist if there is no one there to see it.

So, now research simply has no existence until it is communicated from one scientist to another. The fact is that there is no "fact" in science that is final or significant in itself. Work has meaning only as it is connected to the general fund of knowledge and to the extent that it is es-

tablished as a base for further increase of knowledge. It gets so connected and established only by communication. No discovery is ever the work of one man or group of men, working in isolation from the concerns of the community of science as a whole. On the contrary, most discoveries are made simultaneously by two or more independent workers or groups of workers.

## **Communication in Research**

This consideration of the importance of communication in research underlines the highly practical significance of freedom in the communications of science. The last two decades of war and cold war have seen an appalling expansion of secrecy in the operations of our Federal Government. Public officials have set up or fallen into practices that are foreign and repugnant to our system of government. Censorship has pressed most heavily upon science. It does not only obscure large areas of applied science. The technological revolution in warfare is pushing the frontiers of knowledge; as a result, much work in basic science is classified as "top secret," "secret" and "confidential." And because people, as well as documents, are classified, censorship reaches far outside the government payroll to embroil a frightening per-

centage of our scientific establishment in the security system.

### The Moss Committee

All of this has been said before, and it has been the subject for eloquent protest and indignation at every recent AAAS convention. But there was no systematic inquiry into the spread of censorship until a year ago when the so-called Moss Committee of the House of Representatives undertook its investigation of government information policies. This Committee — a sub-committee of the House Committee on Government Operations, headed by Representative John E. Moss of California—has given us a model demonstration of the exercise of the Congressional investigative power. Its quiet and thorough work deserves much better coverage by the press, especially by the press of science. Testimony before this Committee has developed for the first time the magnitude of the problem of censorship.

Witnesses have agreed that censorship since the outbreak of World War II has locked up something like 100,000 file drawers full of classified documents in the city of Washington and at U. S. military and governmental installations throughout the world. The Army estimates that it alone has 2,000,000 classified documents in its files. Such an accumulation of secret material must be deeply disturbing to anyone who prizes the institutions of our democracy. It is a measure of the degree to which we have permitted anxiety about national security to compromise our traditions and our principles of government.

One report of the Moss Committee reminds us that nowhere in our Constitution or in our statutes is the Executive Department authorized to declare things secret. The government information statute is itself one of the earliest on our books. It set up rules and regulations for the disclosure of information by public officials and makes no provision anywhere in its language for secrecy. Yet it is this very statute which is now invoked in presidential orders establishing censorship and secrecy. Now, of course, there is need for secrecy in the operation

of government. But censorship has flourished in recent years throughout the Executive Department without supervision or review by the legislature or by the courts. Perhaps this is because the original statute, making no provision for censorship, made no provision for its review. The Moss Committee is the first agency to undertake such an investigation.

The secret documents that cram the files in Washington relate, of course, to all kinds of concerns of government, to intelligence reports, to forgotten purchase orders, as well as to current scientific research. Some of these documents probably should not be declassified for a generation; it

*The problem of "unnecessary censorship" of governmental and scientific material is receiving increasing attention and it is one that is naturally of considerable interest to people in the public relations field. One of the best expositions of the problem was given recently by Mr. Piel, who is the publisher of the magazine, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, at a conference on scientific editorial problems at a meeting held by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The editors of the JOURNAL take pleasure in reprinting here a substantial excerpt from Mr. Piel's essay on the subject.*

might be wise, for example, to reserve certain intelligence reports for inspection by future historians.

### Research Stays Classified

Some documents, however, should never have been classified, especially in realms of fundamental science, and ought to be immediately declassified. But it is clear from the testimony before the Moss Committee that most of these documents will never be declassified. The sheer magnitude of the task and the scarcity of qualified personnel, they say, will make it impossible, no matter how well-intentioned and determined we would like to be. The best the Army hopes to do is declassify about 10 per cent of the documents in its custody, a maximum of about a quarter of a million. Declassification

at this rate could not even keep up with the current rate of classification. All of the testimony points to the conclusion that we must seek prevention rather than cure. The most that can be hoped is that some brake on the rubber stamp will slow down the accumulation of secret papers.

This is especially important for science, because research tends to stay classified once the rubber stamp has made its mark. Most strictly military censorship has its own built-in, automatic declassification. The order of battle cannot be kept secret for long because military plans are self-disclosing as they are put into operation against the enemy. Similarly, the data surrounding the development of a new weapon are disclosed to larger and larger number of people as the weapon progresses from the laboratory and the factory to the field. But there is no such automatic process for research. Work in science will stay locked up unless pressure is brought to bear upon the military to declassify it.

Many fields of science, according to testimony before the Moss Committee, are now compromised by the taint of secrecy. Professor Philip M. Morse of M.I.T. told a wry story in this connection. He published what he thought was a novel and significant contribution to queueing, or waiting line theory. This is a branch of mathematics that has many uses in a world where increasing numbers of people are standing in line; it can help to schedule the landing of airplanes at crowded airports or to decide how many cash registers to install at a supermarket. When his paper was published, Morse found himself subjected to catcalls from certain colleagues who had been associated in a secret, wartime project with Bernard O. Koopman, now at Columbia.

Koopman, they said, had done the work long ago. Morse had never heard about it because he had not been involved in that particular project and Koopman's work was still classified. When Morse sought to get the work declassified, he was told that, while Koopman's paper was itself concerned with a no longer classified

*Continued on Page 16*

# LEARNING TO USE RESEARCH

*Continued from Page 11*

The present difficulty in getting research techniques more widely used in public relations work stems in part from the fact the public relations profession is not yet really a profession at all. The work as yet has none of the identifying characteristics of the true professions. There is no standard academic background, no degree of public control, and no "transferable body of knowledge." Public relations people "come from everywhere." They usually can write with some facility; they know something about human communications processes; usually they are reasonably articulate. They can "get along with people," and they are fairly creative in terms of ideas and "things to do." But, aside from the writing skills, the qualities mentioned are widely distributed in many walks of life. They are not monopolized by public relations people.

A good many public relations practitioners have had newspaper work as a background, though the number who have had this specialized experience is perhaps diminishing, percentage-wise. Some practitioners come from the advertising field. Some have been educators, magazine men, or public officials. A few have been lawyers. Very often the one basic quality they all share is the writing skill, the ability—as one of my colleagues put it—to "read and write better than the clients."

Now the writing skill is all very good, but it does not necessarily equip a man to deal with matters of sociology, or public policy, or with intricate financial problems—or with research. Yet these are among the very matters with which public relations people must increasingly deal. To some extent, the fact that the average public relations man is glib at the typewriter is or can be a curse; he

can adroitly use words to avoid the need to deal with basic problems and issues. He can cause a client or employer to talk loftily about "freedom" and "liberty," and "public policy," without ever knowing, really, exactly what it is that he is talking about. The use of abstractions is always a temptation. Sometimes a less articulate man may find the going tougher, but may come up with better thinking.

In any case, it is reasonable to suppose that the rather "scatterized" background of public relations men, plus their unusual facility at being articulate, plus their ability to make reasonably creative guesses, all combine to make many of them rather uneasy—or perhaps "unaware"—in the presence of a well-defined discipline such as opinion and attitude research.

## **Failures to Use Research**

Quite aside from the matter of personal background, there are at least two other reasons why public relations people often take a dim view of research or at least fail to use it.

One quite simple reason has to do with the habit of some research people, especially the younger men, of using professional jargon and giving the impression that research is really a quite mysterious art. Many public relations people are baffled even by simple technical concepts—such as concept as random sampling—but they are actually confounded and consequently put off by some of the cloudier ideas—"scaling," for example, or "operations research." A man often distrusts what he does not understand, and many public relations people do not understand the technical aspects of research. Research people, who would like to regard public relations men as their

friends, and even as potential clients, do themselves no good by using jargon needlessly. Nor is it helpful for the research man to imply that practically no information is any good until it has been run through the I.B.M. machines.

The other reason for an arms-length attitude toward research in my field is—and I say reluctantly—a matter of plain old-fashioned competition: competition in terms of prestige and competition in terms of money. A public relations man who usually operates on the basis of shrewd guesswork, as some do, is likely to feel that his "status" is in danger when an outsider threatens to question his guesswork by scientific method. Moreover, research costs money; and when a business organization spends money on research in the public relations area it may have to divert this money from something else the public relations man would like to do.

## **Gap Between Public Relations Work and Opinion Research**

The gap between public relations work and opinion research becomes more easily seen when we look at the contrast offered by the widespread use of market research. While the public relations vice-president is rejecting the use of research to "find out what the workers want" (he thinks he knows already; they want money, of course), the vice-president in charge of sales and marketing is ordering large quantities of research which he knows very well he must have if he is to do a good job for his company.

A manufacturer who makes a highly competitive item in which price is not much of a factor—say, breakfast food, or canned soup—is likely to research package design very

carefully indeed before going all out. A magazine publisher who wishes to expand circulation is likely to have very careful readership studies made. Market research is fairly easy to understand, because it is relatively tangible and can be put to good use by those who do understand it. But the same manufacturer who will spend large sums on market research will take a long time wondering whether he should spend any money at all to find out the answers to public relations questions, such as whether his stockholders will be interested in the contents of the four-color annual report he plans to issue.

### Some Typical Examples

All such judgments — the ones I have been making—must be relative and, of course, subjective. As I indicated earlier, there are reasons for hope; the picture is not entirely bleak. And it is appropriate to cite some typical examples in which the techniques of research have been and are being put to good use for public relations purposes. For example:

A village school board, wondering whether a proposed new school bond issue can win approval in a referendum, uses research to find out how the villagers are thinking. The findings will help determine areas of ignorance and existing misconceptions.

An oil company, concerned about governmental attitudes toward its operations, uses public relations research to find out what governmental personnel really think.

A manufacturing company, about to publish an unusual and perhaps controversial advertisement, uses research to gauge public reaction—not about the impact of the advertisement as a sales tool but in terms of public relations.

A motor car manufacturer, knowing full well that the product is selling, uses research to find out whether customers think as well of the company and its policies as they do of the motor car. If not, steps can be taken to remedy the problem.

A company which senses unrest among a small group of highly-skilled professional employees — electronics

*Continued on Page 24*

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# Science, Censorship And the Public Interest

*Continued from Page 13*

project, it incorporated reference to work by a man named Clark that was still classified. The reason Clark's paper must remain classified, the censors explained, is that nobody has been able to identify this man Clark or to find his paper. Under the circumstances, Professor Morse has taken the only sensible action: he has yielded that salient in the territory of queueing theory to the censors.

We have always opposed the tendency in our Executive Department to make government a private affair. We know from experience how secrecy can shelter corruption and incompetence and promote incest and sterility in the making of policy. Now we have a new reason for opposing secrecy in the operation of government: it obstructs the progress of science.

## Secrecy Injures Science

Secrecy has injured science in another aspect. It has added a smell of the sinister to the climate of sensation which has surrounded the popular discovery of science as the source of new technology for war and peace. Consider, as a recent instance, the statement by a federal judge that "the younger generation of pure scientists" are suspect of treasonable politics. But we cannot blame the censor exclusively for the poisoning of the public relations of science. The sensations have been expanded and inflated by the publicists of science, even by the well-intentioned, to the point where many of our fellow citizens have science firmly identified in their minds as an accessory activity of the weaponizing, home appliance and pharmaceutical industries.

This brings us to the second concern of this conference; that is: scientific writing, addressed to the public outside of science. This function of journalism has assumed an obvious new importance in our life. The theoretically informed citizenry of our democracy must be especially informed today about the work of science if it is to make wise judgments in public affairs. But sound public information about science is also integral to the life of science itself, for this is an era in which science must turn to the public for its support.

Science writing has shown great im-



*The Author, Mr. Piel*

provement in matter and form in this country in recent years. Most scientists will agree that it is distinguished by greater accuracy and by less flagrant affronts to good taste. As a result, they have accepted the notion of collaboration with science writers, just as they have accepted the notion of collaboration with technical writers. But we have far to go.

The principal appeal in the popularization of science is still the one-note siren song of utility. Science, in

the public mind, is a means to ends—to all kinds of exciting and useful ends, to be sure: to the space ships that are being delivered this year by our automobile factories, to cancer cures, to bigger bombers and faster jets. As such, science is worthy of public support, the citizen says, providing it comes through with more of the same. There is peril for science, however, in reliance upon this distorted view. The same citizen is showing signs of ennui and anxiety at the prospect of further miracles.

There are other deficiencies. The current vintage of science writing shows a tendency to evade the difficulties of exposition; knotty topics are suspended instead in a solution of rich and beautiful prose. In the newer media of communication, which have more recently discovered that science is a matter of large public interest, the popularization of science is confounded by rituals of mass entertainment. One standard routine dramatizes science through the biography of a hero scientist: at the denouement, he is discovered in a lonely laboratory crying "Eureka" at a murky test tube held up to a bare light bulb. Another treatment invites the audience to identify itself with a hopelessly fatuous master of ceremonies who plays straightman for kindly, condescending Dr. Science.

## "World Series of Science"

Here, at this gathering, we ourselves, according to the press releases, are participants in the "World Series of Science."

All of this, we are told, is what the public wants. But even if it could be shown that the public had a taste for such dubious entertainment (the Hooper ratings are against it) it would still be hard to see how it promotes the popularization of science. The suspicion grows that the mass communication image of science reflects not the public taste but merely lack of ardor on the part of these popularizers.

But publishers and producers are learning that the half-life of bunkum in America is growing short. It is increasingly dangerous to underestimate

*Continued on Page 18*

## Books In Review

**THE HIDDEN PERSUADERS**, by Vance Packard. McKay, New York, 266 pages, \$4.00

This new book by Mr. Packard can probably be classed as "required reading" for all public relations people.

This is not because Mr. Packard has discovered any wholly new or unknown information. Rather, it is because he has brought together in this work a good deal of factual material about the current status of "motivation research."

It is no secret that motivation research today is a controversial subject. Some of the older and well-established firms in the field of attitude and opinion research argue that they have always been aware that human motivations have to be probed for, that opinions given by people are not necessarily their real opinions, and that, in fact, even people trying to be completely honest may not know or even sense their own motivations.

On the contrary, those who would have you believe that motivation research is something new point to the inadequacies of simple "nose-counting"—that is, pure quantitative research in which the interviewers make little or no effort to get behind the superficial answer.

To the public relations man, who wants to talk to people in terms of their own real interests, this argument is of direct concern.

Mr. Packard has written about a rather heavy subject in a somewhat light manner and occasionally his prose is glib. There are also instances in which he reports on studies and research projects with little or no documentary evidence.

None the less, the author has done a very competent job of bringing together in one place a good many ideas, opinions and facts which are of immediate concern to all engaged in the public relations field.



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# Science, Censorship And the Public Interest

*Continued from Page 16*

the intelligence of the American public. Recently there have been notable additions to the casualty list of the American press. And stars are burning out faster these days.

Unhappily, it is an equally good rule for the science writer not to underestimate the ignorance of his public. This applies not only to the public-at-large; it holds equally well in addressing the otherwise educated members of our society. The ignorant include most of the spokesmen and articulators of the public consciousness: our scholars, artists, writers, lawyers, legislators, and our adminis-

trators and executives in business and government.

It is this ignorance that underlies the divergence in the academies of America between the scientific and the humanities faculties. This is an old story, of course, dating back to the mid-19th Century. It arose from the need to specialize which has sharpened with the increasing complexity of civilization. But the gulf has widened and deepened in recent years. Ignorance of science is advertised today as the warrant of the self-styled humanist. The argument goes this way: "The aim of education is a decent, moral world made up of decent, moral people. Science must therefore be secondary, because science cannot help anyone to be a decent, moral person. Science is vacant where value is concerned. The humanities provide the value."

The humanities, by this line of argument, are staked out as the territory of the anti-rationalists. "Reason," they say, "must ever be the slave of passion." Science can show us how to achieve our ends. But for motivation and purpose we must seek guidance elsewhere, in tradition or faith, in the sensibilities, emotions and yearnings that well up in the human spirit, beyond the understanding and control of reason.

## Outlook Conditioned by Science

To argue thus is to ignore how much of the outlook of all men in our time is conditioned by science. In politics, the choice of the aims of national policy is profoundly conditioned by what we know from human biology and from cultural and physical anthropology about mankind, its history and its place in nature. Never again can a nation assume the mantle

of a "Master Race" or take up a "White Man's Burden" or proclaim a "Manifest Destiny." Cultural relativism has even invaded the world behind the Iron Curtain, where the 19th Century naivetes of Marxism are undergoing revision. The politics of the world is modified equally by what we can do with what we know. The vision of the United Nations and its technical agencies beholds a world at peace because it has eliminated human destitution, misery and disease. Contrast this vision with the teachings of 19th Century moralists who held that human life was of necessity and by definition "bloody, brutish and short."

In personal morality, the notion of the good life and what men live for has been deeply modified by scientific understanding of the cosmos, of the origin of life and the structure of the human personality. Reason is the instructor of passion in other departments of our culture. Consider, for example, the bearing of science upon esthetics. Recent investigation of the giant molecules has shown us how nature achieves in extraordinary perfection the aim of art: in the molecule function is the expression of structure: it is what it is because of the way it is made.

Such are the concerns that inspire the scientist in his work. They are not different from those that move the painter or the composer, the historian or the poet. Utility alone could never have sufficed to bring science to its present wealth of understanding. The motives could never have been less than those that all men share and which inspire the best achievements of men in other fields of intellectual endeavor.

This is the aspect of science most neglected by science writing. It is, I submit, the facet that is most susceptible to popular appreciation and comprehension. The preoccupation with information should give way to popularization of the objectives, the method and spirit of science. If the public is to support the advance of science for motives other than utility, then people must be able to share not only the useful, but the illuminating and the beautiful that come out of the work of science.

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# Through A Glass, Darkly

*Continued from Page 7*

South America wanted to encourage greater participation in an employee suggestion program which we call the Coin Your Ideas plan. It was decided that a good way to do this would be to whet curiosity by first using "teasers" that would cause conversation among employees and stimulate interest in the announcement to follow.

The teaser technique is an accepted tool in advertising in the United States, but in this area, the misinterpretations of it were potentially serious. This is what happened:

## The 101 Campaign

A number — 101 — was posted in prominent places throughout a refinery. The idea was to dramatize the new emphasis upon the Coin Your Ideas plan by setting a goal of obtaining 101 new ideas from employees within a given period.

A short time before, however, a small cut-back in the work force had been necessary, so when the number 101 was posted throughout the refinery, certain anxious employees saw in it a delicate management's way of letting them know that an additional 101 workers would soon be discharged. So serious did this misapprehension become, that special meetings had to be called and a special issue of the plant newspaper published to dispel the mistaken idea.

Clearly, we live in a world where the same set of objective data may be variously interpreted, depending on the background of the consumer of the data. This phenomenon has been the subject of research by social psychologists who have found that people react differently to the same advertisements, remember or forget different passages of the same political address

depending on their party allegiance, read different meanings into the same ink blots. They tend to reconstruct facts to fit preconceived biases or fears.

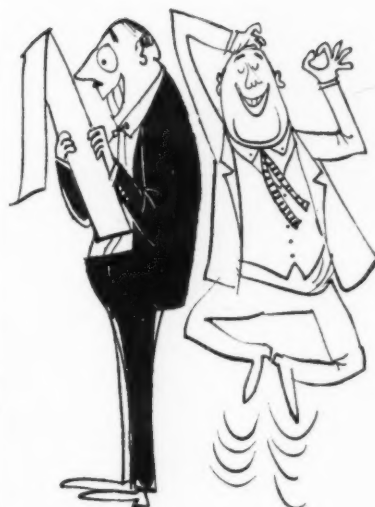
Sometimes the acceptance of certain "facts" and the rejection of others can result in the actual emergence of a new situation. Dr. Robert K. Merton of Columbia University's Department of Sociology has termed this the phenomenon of "the self-fulfilling prophecy." He points out that one would need only convince enough people in a community that a certain bank was insolvent to cause such a run on the bank that the predicted insolvency would occur although the bank would otherwise have remained open.

## "Boomerang Response"

The selective perception which people exhibit in what they remember of advertisements and pamphlets is cited by Merton and Lazarsfeld in what they refer to as the "boomerang response" to a New York City information campaign to encourage people to have their chests X-rayed. In the course of this campaign it was mentioned, quite in passing, that there was no need for the public to fear damage from exposure to X-ray equipment because in the hands of competent technicians such machines were perfectly safe. A sizeable number of persons who heard this message remembered only that X-rays might in some instances be dangerous and, rather than being motivated to seek diagnosis through X-ray, they shunned the clinics.

If these examples of communication difficulties have any lesson for public relations people, it is, I believe,

*Continued on Page 27*



*Get this, Reginald—he says we can go to the 10th Annual Conference in Philadelphia, November 18-20.*

*—Drawing from HOLIDAY "Ad Man's Diary"*

Main line  
to  
Editors

feature

SEND FOR a copy of FEATURE —  
America's only publicity medium.  
It reaches leading U.S. editors with  
your publicity features.

**CENTRAL FEATURE NEWS INC.**  
1475 Broadway, New York 36, New York  
LO. 4-3123

# Puff: The First Press Agent

A good many public relations men, it may be assumed, would like to think that "press agency" is a short-lived product of our hectic times. It is devoutly to be wished, we are told, that press agency will fade away under the impact of professional development.

As they indulge in this wishful thinking, many public relations men try consistently to draw a very sharp line between press agency and what they define in various terms as the practice of public relations. They are at pains to point out that public relations should primarily be concerned with matters of policy and behavior; press agency, even at its best, has only to do with the expert distribution of public information to the proper media in the proper fashion.

## Reach . . .

every radio and TV station in the country with your releases for less than the cost of postage. Use of your releases reported. Write for complete information.

**AIR LINES—10 East 39th Street  
New York 16, New York**

## YALE & TOWNE

### Declares 277th Dividend

**37½¢ a Share**



On May 23, 1957, dividend No. 277 of thirty-seven and one-half cents per share was declared by the Board of Directors out of past earnings, payable on July 1, 1957, to stockholders of record at the close of business June 7, 1957.

**F. DUNNING**

Executive Vice-President and Secretary

**THE YALE & TOWNE MFG. CO.**

Cash dividends paid in every year since 1899

All this care and caution reflects a high threshold of sensitivity on the part of public relations men. They do not care very much even for the word "publicity." The phrase "press agent" is clearly abhorrent.

Perhaps this sensitivity stems mostly from the fact that, for good or for evil, there is a great deal of press agency being practiced, some of it in a rather crude and indelicate fashion. It is perhaps conceivable that a time may come when, as public relations work does become more professional, the semantic confusion will be dispelled and press agency will be recognized for what it is—a junior arm of public relations, and a useful tool under certain circumstances.

But how soon this happy development will come to pass is an open question. Press agency, I have discovered, has a longer history than I once thought, implying a certain hardness and durability.

My authority for this discovery is Richard Sheridan, that Eighteenth Century genius who described the press agency of his time in rather grisly detail in "The Critic," a play first produced in the Drury Lane Theatre in 1779. I once wrote somewhere, in a fugitive essay, that the press agent as we know him is a product of modern times; Mr. Sheridan refutes me.

In "The Critic," one of the principal characters is Puff, himself a playwright and, as well, an advocate of his own works. Puff's services are also available, we find, and on a thoroughly professional basis, to others who seek public approbation. We come upon Puff early in the play, talking with Dangle and Sneer.

Puff: *Mr. Sneer is this? Sir, he is a gentleman whom I have long panted for the honour of knowing—a gentleman whose critical talents and transcendent judgment—*

Sneer: *Dear Sir—*

Dangle: *Nay, don't be modest, Sneer; my friend Puff only talks to you in the style of his profession.*

Sneer: *His profession?*

Puff: *Yes, sir; I make no secret of the trade I follow: among friends and brother authors, Dangle knows I love to be frank on the subject, and to advertise myself viva voce. I am, sir, a practitioner in panegyric, or, to speak more plainly, a professor of the art of puffing, at your service—or anybody else's.*

Sneer expresses surprise and states his belief that most authors should be able to write their own press notices. Nonsense, says Puff, and lays claim to writing nine out of ten of the paragraphs Sneer reads. The conversation continues—

Puff: *Even the auctioneers now—the auctioneers, I say—though the rogues have lately got some credit for their language—not an article of the merit theirs . . . No, sir, 'twas I first enriched their style—'twas I first taught them to crowd their advertisements with panegyric superlatives, each epithet rising above the other, like the bidders in their own auction rooms . . .*

Puff then explains that there is no mystery to his art; that he has reduced it all to rule, being the first practitioner so to do. Sneer is again surprised at this trend toward mechanization, but he is suitably enlightened.

Puff: *Yes, sir, puffing is of various sorts; the principal are, the puff direct, the puff preliminary, the puff collateral the puff collusive, and the puff oblique, or puff by implication. These all assume, as circumstances require, the various forms . . .*

Our authority now proceeds to describe each of the various forms of puffing and how they may be employed to sway opinion. Hear him now in his description of the puff direct.

Puff: *For instance—a new comedy or farce is to be produced at one of the theatres . . . suppose Mr. Smatter or Mr. Dapper or any particular friend of mine—very well; the day before it is to be performed, I write an account of the manner in which it was received. I have*

*Continued on Page 26*

**High Market Concentration**

**Equals**

$$H^1 M_{C^2} = H^2 M_{S^4}$$

**High Market Saturation.**

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**the ONLY Media is**

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public relations profession.**

**Reaches more than 16,000 influential public relations  
people monthly.**

**Write or Phone the Advertising Dept., Public Relations Journal**

**2 West 46th St., New York 36.**

# RUMOR, FALSE REPORT AND PROPAGANDA

Continued from Page 10

this or that action. Merely the tone of a headline may tend to assassinate a man's business, political or personal character.

Reporters and other writers have a difficult task. The reading public expects to be given a true report of an event, and the writers may in all honesty think they are providing this. But the reporters get their information from people who are sometimes eyewitnesses of the event, sometimes not. The only report of a crime available to the public may be written by a reporter who received it from a policeman who had it from a man who saw the event from a half block away. There is ample chance for rumor, embellishment and mistake to creep in.

The code of the American Society of Newspaper Editors declares "News reports should be free from opinion or bias of any kind." Even when this code is earnestly observed by writers, the reader is not excused from exercising reasonable care to detect bias, perhaps produced by leanings the writer does not know he has.

Readers would be helped in this weeding out if newspapers adopted the precaution of incorporating a warning when statements are unverified, or deductions unproved. The responsibility of the press is not alone to avoid libelous statements for which they might be held accountable at law, but to pro-

tect their readers from being misled by mere rumor, by unverified gossip, and by black propaganda.

Readers may protect themselves from many errors of thought by taking a simple precaution: look at the adjectives in any written news or comment. They can make of truth a false report. Are they laudatory? Are they disparaging? Do they add emphasis to a fact? Do they minimize an event? Is the general effect of a piece of writing to make you angry? Then score out the adjectives with your pencil and see if the article still has the same effect.

## Office Politics

The game of office politics makes use of rumor, gossip and false report in ugly and crude ways. The war for show and place, the shouldering of fellow workers out of the way, the underhand maneuvering, the seizing of opportunities to give someone a verbal black eye: these go on, to a little or great extent in every company, big or small.

One executive met the menace in an unusual way. He had on his desk as a paper-weight a statuette of the three little monkeys: see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil. When one of his junior executives or department managers got around in a conversation to something that seemed to be verging on office politics, the executive picked up the paper-weight and toyed with it. He found it an effective way of stopping office politics in his office in a good-natured way.

Other sorts of rumor and false report need different treatment. Testing for factuality is still the sovereign way to attack suspicious statements.

We need to apply some creative thinking to our appreciation of what

we hear. It is our chief working tool. What goes on here? Who is trying to get me to do what, and why? What would happen if I were to respond as he desires?

Some practical help is given us by Korzybski in *Science and Sanity*, quoted by Chase in *Power of Words*. He suggests warning signals to keep our thinking and our talking straight: (1) add "etc." to a statement to show that all the facts are not included; (2) use index numbers to remind us of differences between proper names—John<sup>1</sup> is not John<sup>2</sup>; (3) use dates, because objects and thoughts about them change from year to year; (4) use hyphens, to show that events are connected; (5) use quotation marks around abstract words and phrases as a warning to treat them with care.

## Stopping Rumor

To protect ourselves against being taken in by rumor and false report and black propaganda we do not need to develop into suspicious-minded people who look sourly upon the world. All that is suggested is that we take reasonable and intelligent measures to avoid being fooled.

It is one of the attributes of mankind that we can look at all sides of a question and consider how far the facts will support an opposite view. There is a significant fable about two knights who fought about the color of a shield of which neither looked at more than one side. Each combatant, seeing clearly his own aspect of the question, has charged his opponent with stupidity or dishonesty in not seeing the same aspect of it, while each has lacked the candor or the curiosity to go over to his opponent's side and find out how it was that he saw things so differently.

### THE IMPACT OF RUMOR

Most public relations practitioners would agree that rumor is an important element in the world of communications—often an evil element.

But rumor is hard to define, and hard to come to grips with.

One interesting essay on the subject was published recently by the Royal Bank of Canada in its *Monthly Letter*. We take pleasure in publishing it here.

This finding out what is on the other side of the shield is a necessary part of any effort to stop or counter false rumor. An article in the periodical *Industry* said that in the battle against false rumor there can be no offensive, only a defense. In business, this means telling workers what affects them, quickly, completely and unambiguously. You might install a rumor clinic as part of the personnel department, with an assignment to find out what rumors are being spread, find out the answers and make known the explanation. This could be an invaluable morale booster, but it will need to avoid generalities and descend to particulars.

The defense against rumor must be honest. When Gavin Douglas appealed to the Archbishop of Glasgow, in the early part of the 16th century, urging him to try to keep the peace, the Archbishop, striking his breast, protested on his conscience that his intentions were peaceable. Alas for him, the ringing sound of metal revealed the coat of mail he wore under his robes.

#### Avoiding Rumor

As for our own part in spreading rumor, it is probably wise counsel to keep silent for the most part, or to speak only what is necessary, and in few words, when the conversation gets around to rumor-prone matters.

The young business man will prosper his promotion if he cultivates the habit of saying nothing for long periods at a time.

Small-talk seems to be necessary in our civilization. It may be made up of platitudes and a dash of witticism, but it should be flavored with goodwill and generosity. What we are exercised about is the intrusion into it of harmful gossip and rumor. Under the noise made by this grown-up's rattle, much damage can be done by cunning people. An indiscreet phrase dropped in small-talk may be picked up and used to damage a budding career.

To an immature mind, silence may be a goad to indiscretion, but not to the thoughtful youth pursuing his way toward eminence in his business or profession. A clerk, James Simpson, who became chairman of Marshall Field and Company, smoked cigars

## Have you made this important discovery

*...to spread your Securities story?*

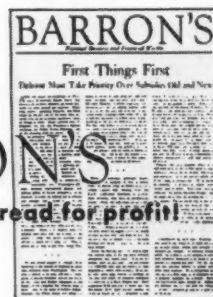
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\* Ask for the latest readership study among Security Analysts and Investment Bankers!

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**CHICAGO**  
711 W. Monroe St.

**BOSTON**  
388 Newbury St.

**LOS ANGELES**  
2999 W. 6th St.

**ATLANTA**  
75 Eighth St., N. E.  
Blanchard-Nichols-Osborn

so as to be sure he would keep his mouth shut; another man, given to talking often in conferences, propped against his water-glass a little card on which he had printed: "Keep quiet." James Rand, Jr., head of Remington Rand, said he did not believe it possible for a man to succeed in a big way who talked confidential company affairs even to his wife.

Let us not think for a minute that all the direful results belong to the victim. The loose talker sabotages his

own integrity. Knowing his own unreliability he finds it hard to trust others. He misses many opportunities for true friendships, the stuff of which a happy life is woven.

Through unnumbered centuries of human experience there have been built up certain codes of conduct and standards of action. Those who practice these codes are believers in the Golden Rule and the square deal. Their conduct is consistent with their convictions.

# LEARNING TO USE RESEARCH

*Continued from Page 15*

engineers, for instance—uses attitude research to pin-point the cause of the unrest.

Manufacturer X, distributing products through franchise holders, conducts a study to see whether the franchise holders are happy and, if not, why not.

A "cause" group about to publish a series of booklets on some fairly technical subjects, sponsors a research study to determine the interest level of the audience.

Members of a professional group, concerned about their status with non-professional people, invest in research to find out just what their status level really is.

A government unit, such as the U. S. Army, hoping to get volunteer recruits rather than draftees, sponsors research to find out how its "appeals" stack up with what potential volunteers really want in a career.

This list (the examples are all

based on actual research with which I am familiar) could be made much longer. Public relations men *are* using research more extensively; we *do* know more about research; there *are* a good many cases in which research is put to good use for public relations purposes. My complaint is that there are not enough such cases.

## Several Answers Suggested

So, what must we do about all this? I would like to suggest several answers.

One of the things we must do is to wait, patiently, perhaps for another five or ten years. Time will take care of a good part of the problem. We will all grow up. Public relations people, pressed constantly to become more orderly in their approach to the public relations problems of business management, must look increasingly

toward research to give them some of the answers. This will happen, inevitably.

A second thing we can do, and research people can help in this as well as public relations people, is to work toward higher standards in the schools and colleges where public relations is being taught. The effort to "teach" public relations work is a phenomenon of the last ten years or so, and no one knows whether it will work. We all hope it will, and hope also that the teachers will know what the subject matter is. It would seem clear that some academic training may offer one very promising way of getting our public relations men of the future to know something about research and its values before they get into the world of "practical" affairs.

We must try also to find a way to establish a good working relationship between the public relations field and

*Continued on Page 28*

## *A Public Relations Man Advising His Boss — Shakespearean Style*

York: O my liege,  
Pardon me, if you please; if not, I, pleased  
Not to be pardon'd, am content without.  
Seek you to seize and gripe into your hands  
The royalties and rights of banished Hereford?  
Is not Gaunt dead, and doth not Hereford live?  
Was not Gaunt just, and is not Harry true?  
Did not the one deserve to have an heir?  
Is not his heir a well-deserving son?  
Take Hereford's rights away, and take from time  
His charter and his customary rights;  
Let not tomorrow then ensue today:  
Be not thyself; for how art thou a king  
But by fair sequence and succession?  
Now, upon God — God forbid I say true! —  
If you do wrongfully seize Hereford's rights,

Call in the letters patents that he hath  
By his attorneys-general to sue  
His livery, and deny his offer'd homage.  
You pluck a thousand dangers on your head,  
You lose a thousand well-disposed hearts  
And prick my tender patience to those thoughts  
Which honour and allegiance cannot think.

King Richard: Think what you will, we seize into our hands  
His plate, his goods, his money and his lands.

York: I'll not be by the while; my liege, farewell;  
What will ensue hereof, there's none can tell;  
But by bad courses may be understood  
That these events can never fall out good.

Exit.

—From "Richard II"

# Information, Truth

Continued from Page 9

## "Assuredly, information can and does affect opinions. But under what conditions?"

etc., the same message reported through different media may receive different degrees of acceptance.

Furthermore, when the communication is essentially a prediction about future events, the conditions underlying acceptance of the appeal as true are more complex. This is particularly obvious when the prediction is conditioned on the audience's performing certain acts: buying a certain soap to achieve social popularity or voting for a certain candidate to achieve a sound government—or on the audience's *not* performing certain acts: if you do not urge your congressman to defeat this bill, regimenting socialism will result. Full acceptance of the prediction as true may hinge on the actual occurrence of the predicted event; but only if the message is recalled *at that time*, is the proper truth-value accorded the communication.

### The Complexity of the Problem

Only a few of the many bases for the judgment of truth have been mentioned. However, even this brief catalogue should be sufficient to establish the complexity of the problem. To assert dogmatically that an information campaign can influence opinions and attitudes is often to view the communication influence process from the point of view of the communicator or the clipping service. Instead, the focus must be upon and from the perspective of the human recipient of the communication. For the influence process is a psychological, intrapersonal one of a fluid and dynamic character. The registering of the information is but the initiator of the continuing, overlapping sequences of

psychological responses to the communication stimuli. And accepting the information as true is but one major phase, though a critical one, of the process culminating in opinion change.

## Public Relations And Judicial Reforms

"In his address before the State Bar of California at its recent annual meeting, Chief Justice Phil S. Gibson named as the third of three basic essentials to a successful judicial reform campaign, 'a competent, professionally-directed public relations program to create and maintain public interest in good judicial administration.'

"These words are worth pondering as the 1957 legislative year dawns and bar associations, judicial councils and other organizations in all parts of the country go to work to get their current projects enacted into law or adopted by the people. There is only one spectacle more pitiful than a public relations practitioner writing his own will and that is a bar association attempting to carry on its own campaign for adoption of a major constitutional reform.

"The drafting of the text of an amendment to the judicial article or a state constitution, or a statute, or a court rule, certainly is a job for lawyers, and even if a lay organization were to decide to undertake to have it done, it would be forced to hire an attorney to do it. But conducting a campaign for its adoption, once it is drafted, is quite a different operation. Questions as to the extent of use of the various media of publicity, emphasis to be given to certain issues, choice of speakers, and audiences, enlistment of support of lay groups and organizations, and a host of others, all lie within the province of another pro-

Continued on Page 26

### UNUSUAL — EFFECTIVE EXCLUSIVE

The Let's Have Better Mottos Association direct mail campaign does an outstanding public relations — advertising — sales job. Write for details.

Fred Gymer — 2123 E. 9th St. Cleveland 15

### CLIPPING ANALYSIS

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Does away with old-style celluloid holders, pins and buttons. Goes on easy . . . comes off easy. Many styles, uses, high in praise. Used at Sales Meetings, conventions, picnics, PR Convention, many corporations, clubs, schools, etc. You will love this name plate badge. Send today for

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When answering advertisements, please address as follows: Box number, PUBLIC RELATIONS JOURNAL, 2 West 46th Street, New York 36, N. Y. RATES: "Position Wanted" \$1.00 per line, 5-line minimum; "Help Wanted" \$2.00 per line, 5-line minimum. Payable in advance.

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Extensive experience in creating and editing publications for customers, prospects, employees, salesmen, executives. Has handled releases to newspapers and trade press, done some public speaking. Minimum \$10,000. BOX LW-7.

**French P. R. counsel 43, aggressive, 7 years international practice**, serving prominent American clients industry in Europe, would welcome opportunity permanent career in U. S. with large P. R. or Advertising firm, preferably with assignments overseas. Capable create and animate foreign relations department. Fluent French, English, German, fair Spanish. Personal Data Sheet on Request. Box SG-7.

### Help Wanted

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Export Promotion  
"News since 1904"  
European Headquarters:  
AMSTERDAM, HOLLAND  
NEW YORK: 157 Chambers St. DI 9-2287



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**Burrelle's** Est. 1888  
**PRESS CLIPPING BUREAU**  
phone BA 7-5371  
165 Church St., New York 7, N. Y.



# Puff: The First Press Agent

Continued from Page 20

the plot from the author, and only add — "characters strongly drawn—highly colored—hand of a master—fund of genuine humour..."

Sneer: That's pretty well indeed, sir.

Puff: Oh, cool—quite cool!—to what I sometimes do.

Sneer: And do you think there are any who are influenced by this?

Puff: Oh, Lud, yes, sir! The number of those who undergo the fatigue of judging for themselves is very small indeed.

It is my earnest hope that Mr. Puff, in his various forms, will tend to disappear into the background as modern business management tends to recognize the responsibilities of the communications process more adequately than is the case today. Mr. Puff is an amusing character. But serious citizens of a democracy are likely to find his activities something of an irritation. The business community has a story to tell, a very important one indeed. But those who help to determine how that story is to be presented—the editors and media executives—are likely to become more cynical



There must be an easier way to do it, George... Let's go to the 10th Annual Conference in Philadelphia, November 18-20.

—Drawing from HOLIDAY  
"Ad Man's Diary"

rather than more sympathetic if they come to believe that business is applying the principles of pre-fabrication and even automation to the production of information as well as to products.

## Public Relations and Judicial Reform—Continued

fession—that of the public relations counsellor.

"True, many lawyers know quite a lot about public relations, and on occasion have successfully put over campaigns of the type to which we refer. Many laymen also know quite a lot of law, and on occasion have drafted a contract or will and gotten away with it. But it is still true that they should engage a lawyer for such work, and that lawyers should engage professional public relations counsel to direct their campaigns.

"Whenever major judicial reform projects have succeeded, it has been with the active assistance and direction of competent professional public relations counsel... Where they have failed, one of the reasons has been inadequate at-

tention to this factor...

"... Their services are rather expensive—about as expensive as those of a good lawyer. But don't forget that part of their job is the raising of funds for the campaign, of which their own fees are but a drop in the bucket. If your association is engaged in, or planning, a judicial reform project which requires to any substantial extent the winning of public support, be sure that the legal draftsmanship is in the hands of a competent lawyer, and be equally sure that your bid for public support is in the hands of an equally competent public relations man..."

—The "Journal of the American Judicature Society,"  
October-December, 1956, Issue



# Professional Directory

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**SUBJECT:** More Effective Financial Public Relations and Share Owner Communications

**FROM:** Gartley & Associates, Inc., 68 William Street, New York 5, N. Y. Whitehall 3-6770

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## Through a Glass, Darkly — Continued

that the communicator must expect the unexpected from his audience. He must not regard the news release, or pamphlet, or speech as an end in itself. He must not be so in love with his own skill with words that he neglects knowing people's minds. He must try to persuade his principals that facts do not "speak for themselves"—

that even though Fact A plus Fact B leads inexorably to Conclusion C for management and its friends, A plus B may lead to Conclusion D, E, or even X for people of different experience and outlook.

In some measure, the risk may be taken out of communications to the public by pre-testing messages with a sample of the intended audience. Such pre-tests will help spot areas of ambiguity or misunderstanding in the material. They will give us a measure

of whether our presentation is interesting to our public. If properly conducted, they will tell us something about the counter-arguments which our material may evoke. But, useful as pre-tests and attitude surveys may be in making us more sensitive to the public, they are no substitute for the communicator who not only knows what he is talking about but who also knows about people through experience, study and, probably, some inherent sensitivity.



*It's no use, sir. They want you to attend the 10th Annual Conference in Philadelphia, November 18-20.*

—Drawing from HOLIDAY  
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# LEARNING TO USE RESEARCH

*Continued from Page 24*

the research discipline. At the present time, sad to say, a research man who knows a great deal about human attitudes and opinions—the raw material of public relations—is not thereby eligible for membership in the Public Relations Society of America, even though a good many press agents are. I suggest that some sort of "joint council" might be set up between the PRSA and AAPOR. It would help to establish common understanding and confidence.

## Final Goal

And a final goal we can all think about—though here the shadows are darker—is the goal of trying to educate business management (including public relations men) to the idea that general public attitudes toward management, in its role as citizen, are in the long run just as important as attitudes toward the shape of a package or the color of a motor car. More than one company, and more than one industry, has found itself in serious trouble because it has ignored the principle that attitudes toward management are formed by management actions and management behavior, not by words. If behavior is this important, then it takes research, not guesswork, to determine how and to what extent behavior is consistent with the public interest.

## About the Future

I will conclude by adopting a posture of Olympian calm about the future, which I regard with serenity. Not long ago, I was being introduced to an audience by a chairman who apparently wanted to endow me with some prestige and authority. Looking first at me and then at the cowed audience, he said, "Our speaker, you should know, has been

in public relations for more than a quarter of a century."

It sounded like a long time. But I was shocked to realize that it was substantially true. I have not actually been in public relations as such for that long; but if you include newspaper work, I have been engaged in and pre-occupied with human communications matters for the stated period. Whether this proves any special sagacity on my part is another question. But it does, perhaps, give me some sense of perspective.

This sense of perspective causes me to feel that things are not going too badly *vis-a-vis* public relations and research. As I have said, there are some peculiar things going on in the public relations world: the press agent is still with us; there are some Madison Avenue sharecroppers who do not need research because they have all the answers now, in prefabricated form; there are even some practitioners who prefer to be propagandists, and who thus need no research since their point of view is not determined by facts.

## Things Not So Bad

Nonetheless, things are not so bad. Prediction is always hazardous, but it is comforting to think that, if you predict far enough ahead, the prediction will have been forgotten by the time it can be tested. Calmed by this thought, I predict that, in another generation, public relations work will be very much more professional than it now is, and that research skills will be very much more precise than they now are, and that the use of research techniques for public relations purposes will be very much more common than it is today. Let us all hope so. Questions of public policy and human communications in an increasingly complex world call for a rational approach.

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